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EDGAR SNOWDEN.

ALEXANDRIA:

FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 2, 1860.

CONGRESS.—The Senate, yesterday, passed several unimportant measures, and occupied the greater portion of its session in a discussion upon a bill authorizing the sale of the arms of the United States, and placing the National Armories under military control. The House postponed until to-day, the election of Printer, and transacted other business, which will be found in our abstract of the proceedings.

VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE.—There was little business of general interest transacted in the Legislature on Wednesday. In the Senate, the House joint resolution for the extension of the session to March 13th, was agreed to. The pay of the Adjutant General was fixed at \$1,500 per year.

The House of Delegates at its night session passed the Pan Handle railroad bill.—Also a bill to bridge the Ohio River, at Steubenville.

MR. SEWARD'S SPEECH, in the Senate, on Wednesday, was, we presume, and as the Republicans, we suppose, will admit, the authorized declaration of the opinions of the party for which he spoke. On the general character of the speech, and of the arguments used, we do not, at this time, intend to comment. But we wish to hold him, and his party, to the details he made. See the abstract of the speech published in yesterday's Gazette. He denied the equality of the negro with the white man, under our government; and he denied that John Brown's foray was to be excused or defended. Hon. Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, made, a few days ago, a speech to the "Republicans" in New York, in which he denied, emphatically, that the "Republicans" approve of the "principles of John Brown, or the course he pursued." Now, whatever we may think of the sincerity of these denials, or of their adoption by the mass of the party for whom they were made, and however facts may seem to contradict them, we repeat, that we wish to hold the authors of them responsible for their promulgation. Not so much on account of present circumstances, as in view of the future. They have voluntarily made disclaimers and avowals. Let us see how, hereafter, they stand up to their own declarations, and maintain their own positions. It may be important to know, if they intend to be as progressive on that subject, as they are on some others. We have, in the South, nothing to ask of their generosity, and nothing to fear from their prejudices; but we want to know exactly where they stand now, and how they intend to stand for the next four years, at least, if their party should last so long.

The Washington Star, speaking of the "strike" among the Shoemakers in Massachusetts.—"The fact that nearly half the usual Southern demand for Massachusetts boots and shoes has fallen off, must operate to defeat its success, as with so great a curtailment of the usual demand, the employers know well that they must economize at every point to save themselves from bankruptcy; and that, for a long time to come, they will require but half as many hands as heretofore. Abolitionism in bringing about the less Southern demand for Yankee boots and shoes, has strengthened the hands of the employers, immeasurably, and in that way is working its legitimate results upon the New England millinery."

Rev. Dr. King, Missionary to Greece, writes to the American Board, under date at Athens, December 29th, that, believing the years of his pilgrimage on the earth to be nearly numbered, he has been laboring to finish the work which has been given him to do. In addition to his regular service in Greece, he has been occupied in printing five volumes of his own writings, one in French, and four in modern Greek. He has sold large numbers of the New Testament and Ten Commandments in modern Greek, and has in press a new edition of Baxter's Saints' Rest, in the same language.

The Washington States says: "The Northwest Democracy presents, for the first time in the whole history of the country, an unbroken column in favor of one man. No candidate ever before received, in a Democratic convention, the united vote of the Northwest. It now casts sixty-six votes in favor of Stephen A. Douglas."

The New York Courier and Enquirer lays down the "platform" of the "Republican" party—two "planks" of which are: "Opposition to Slavery extension—And Slavery a local, not a national institution." If it is a local institution, why eternally bring the subject into national politics?

The steamer George Weems, on her last trip from the Potomac River to Baltimore, had a rough time of it:—got aground—ran into Fort Carroll—man overboard, but not drowned—and an alarm of fire. This was enough for one trip.

The Washington States says that "there is no body of men better organized, or more determined, than the Virginia Opposition." The fact is, Goggin showed them, but a little while ago, what they could do, if they would only work with a will."

The Jeffersonian (Tazewell Co.) Advocate, a staunch Democratic journal, is very severe upon the late Democratic Convention. It thinks such things as were enacted in that body, will do no good to the party.

Hon. George W. Rowles has declined the appointment of United States Treasurer, tendered him by President Buchanan.

The Staunton Spectator says: "The true policy of all editors who desire to promote the respectability and usefulness of the press, is to abstain as far as possible from controversies. Every editor can maintain his own cause without strife with his neighbors, and we feel sure that this course is most agreeable to all readers of intelligence and good taste. There is a class of readers who read newspapers for the sake of the excitement which it affords, and the more personal and violent it becomes, the more they like it, but they would take the more delight in a cock fight, and no man of proper self-respect will deliberately enter the pit to afford entertainment to such people."

The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Press, who writes over the signature of "Occasional," thus mysteriously alludes to the shadow of coming events in Mexico:—"Do not be at all astonished if, within a few days, the whole country is agitated by such a demonstration upon Mexico, as will present new and exciting issues to the people. The pear is almost ripe, and, I have no doubt, in a short time will fall into our lap."

The New York Commercial says that a robbery of jewelry (in bond) was committed some days ago, at the U. S. Public Stores, in New York. Some of the Detective Police have had the matter under investigation, and have kept the circumstance a profound secret. It is said that the robbers are parties in the employ of contractors under the Government, and one or more arrests have been made.

We learn from the Charlestown Free Press that petitions are in circulation for signatures, for the commutation of the punishment of Stevens and Hazlett, who are to be hung on the 16th of March.

Messrs Ladd, Webster & Co., No. 500 Broadway, New York, write to us, that the telegraphic dispatch from Baltimore, of the 25th ult., stating that the suit between Mr. Singer and them, (relative to Sewing Machines), was decided in favor of plaintiff, was incorrect. The verdict was in their favor, on all the issues.

In the letter from Richmond, published yesterday, the word Froburg was printed, instead of Strasburg.

Letter from Richmond.

Correspondence of the Alexandria Gazette. RICHMOND, Feb. 29.—The Senate, to-day, agreed to the House resolution, fixing the 13th of March as the day of adjournment; and passed the bill amending the Charter of the City of Alexandria, which was communicated to the House by the Senator from Fairfax and Alexandria.

The House passed the Pittsylvania Railroad bill, (local road,) without any State subscription; ordered the Militia bill to be reported; and then, after a session of three hours, adjourned. The bill, a few days ago, a speech to the "Republicans" in New York, in which he denied, emphatically, that the "Republicans" approve of the "principles of John Brown, or the course he pursued." Now, whatever we may think of the sincerity of these denials, or of their adoption by the mass of the party for whom they were made, and however facts may seem to contradict them, we repeat, that we wish to hold the authors of them responsible for their promulgation. Not so much on account of present circumstances, as in view of the future. They have voluntarily made disclaimers and avowals. Let us see how, hereafter, they stand up to their own declarations, and maintain their own positions. It may be important to know, if they intend to be as progressive on that subject, as they are on some others. We have, in the South, nothing to ask of their generosity, and nothing to fear from their prejudices; but we want to know exactly where they stand now, and how they intend to stand for the next four years, at least, if their party should last so long.

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News of the Day.

"To show the very age and body of the times."

The news from Liberia is favorable. President Benson has entered upon his third term. In his Message to the Legislature, he says: "Our seasons have been favorable. The soil has abundantly rewarded the hand of industry. Commerce has manifestly increased. With few exceptions, among some of the native clans, peace predominates. Our foreign relations may be regarded as tranquil. The agricultural interest of the Republic is making encouraging progress."

Nothing definite has transpired as to the whereabouts or fate of H. S. D. Northway, of Norfolk, Conn., whose mysterious disappearance, under suspicious circumstances, from the Metropolitan Hotel, New York, has occasioned some talk; but the detectives who were commissioned to work up the case, intimate that the gentleman has gone to Kansas, for certain reasons, which, however consoling to those who were afraid he was murdered, are not likely to be appreciated by his creditors.

J. Buchanan Cross, whose name has been somewhat prominent of late in the public journals, as connected with certain forgeries on the Consolidated Bank, at Philadelphia, was tried on Tuesday in the Quarter Sessions, on one indictment, and acquitted.—There are other indictments connected with the same transaction, pending against him, and the Court refused to release him on his own recognizance, to appear and answer, but ordered that he should give bail in twenty-five hundred dollars.

Thursday afternoon, says the Troy Whig, a crowd of boys were snow-balling each other on South street, when one of their number, dipping his hand into a bank of snow, was astonished at touching a human face. He alarmed his companions, and an investigation revealed the body of a man lying in the snow. It was recognized as being that of a tailor named Frederick Keis, who lived in that vicinity, and had been missing since Saturday. The deceased was a man given to drink.

One of the most unique of recent inventions is a cane, which is also a lantern—a stout, elegant walking stick, and a brilliant steady light. The lantern is set in the body of the cane about six inches from its top, and so as not to disfigure its proportions of beauty, and can be lit at pleasure by pulling the cane apart, or borne along dead, when the cane without close observation, is undistinguishable from an ordinary large-sized, walking stick.

According to the San Francisco Bulletin, the steamer Saginaw, recently built at the navy yard at Mare Island, is likely to prove a complete failure as the Naragansett, constructed at Charlestown. The Saginaw is the first war vessel built on the Pacific coast for this Government, and the Californians were anxious that she should be an honor to them.

Rumors having been circulated to the effect that the speaker of the Tennessee senate, Hon. T. W. Newman, of Franklin county, had been discovered to be involved in transactions to defraud the Government by means of forged land claims, that gentleman has resigned his position, and it is stated, started for Washington to demand a full investigation.

An American, a son of a gentleman in Boston, has recently been appointed organist of St. Paul's Church, London. There were fifty applications for the place, and the organist was chosen from a list of candidates, after a trial of the merits of all the competitors. This is probably the first instance in which an American has received such an appointment.

The annual conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, for the Maryland district, will begin on Wednesday, the 14th inst. It will be held in Baltimore. The conference extends over the whole of the State of Maryland, the District of Columbia, Delaware, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Two English vessels of war undertook lately to capture the Paraguayan war steamer Tacuari, as she was leaving the port of Buenos Ayres, but she escaped and returned to anchor. The attempted capture of the vessel was intended as a reprisal on Paraguay to satisfy the claims of England against her.

The sloop of war John Adams, after having been home down and completed her repairs, sailed from Rio on the 7th inst., for China. Her commander, Murray Mason, was invalided home, and Lieut. Edward A. Barrett ordered by the flag officer to the acting command.

It is rumored in England that upon the conclusion of her present engagement, which ends during the ensuing month, Mlle. Piccolomini will leave the stage. It is said that she does so in accordance with the solicitation of her family and friends.

A court martial has been appointed to meet at Fort Leavenworth on the 5th March next, or as soon thereafter as practicable, for the trial of Lieut. G. D. Bailey, second cavalry, and such other prisoners as may be brought before it.

The whole number of matriculants in the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania, at the present session, is 528—of whom there are 14 from Maryland, 2 from the District of Columbia, 37 from Virginia, and 71 from North Carolina.

Mention has been made of the recent discovery of a quicksilver mine at Healdsburg, in Napa county, California. The discovery is attracting much attention in California, in consequence of the suspension of operations at the New Almaden mines.

T. F. Nelson, esq., of Clarke county, sold last week twenty-three beautiful Cotswold sheep. Their average weight was 180 to 200 lbs.

Baltimore Annual Conference M. E. Church.

WINCHESTER, Va., Feb. 29.—The Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church commences in this town this morning at nine o'clock, and the evening session will be held at the same place. The leading idea of opposition to executive influence, the victorious party successfully addressed itself to the subject of the one man power, and so consolidated its strength, that under the administration of Mr. Monroe, it found itself without a rival. Every where in the Federal and State Governments, the policy of the country was shaped by its influence.

The meeting of the Conference, it is thought will be a short one, and many think the proceedings will not occupy more than week.—The most important business to be brought before the body will be the election of delegates to the General Conference, for which position a number of persons are already mentioned in outside circles, amongst Messrs. Norval Wilson, Martin, Griffith, Eggleston, Edwards, Brown, Morgan, and others. With the exception of this selection of delegates, the proceedings will be confined to ordinary Conference business, there being nothing in the shape of appeals or trials.

FISH! FISH!—700 lbs. prime Eastern Herring, to arrive, and for sale by M. ELDRIDGE & CO., Feb. 29.

To the People of Virginia.

The following address, from the pen of Robert E. Scott, esq., of Fauquier, was reported to the Whig State Convention, by the Committee on Business, and adopted by that body and ordered to be published:

This Convention, by original appointment, was to have assembled on the 14th day of December last, but it was deemed advisable, in consequence of subsequent events, to postpone its meeting. These events were of a character so unexpected, and accompanied by developments so startling, as to make it, at once, the dictate of prudence and of patriotism to defer our action until further time should be given to discern the issue to which they conducted.

Pursuant to the postponement, we met together at the Capitol of the State, on the 22d of February, and as the day itself is hallowed in the annals of our history, we would, ourselves, catch from it an inspiration of the moderation, wisdom, and virtue of the patriot to whom it gave birth.

At our appointment we were commissioned to deal with the party politics of the day, and on behalf of the Opposition of Virginia, to initiate measures looking to concerted action on the part of the Opposition of all the States, in the approaching election of President.

The public considerations involved in the attempt, well justified the action, although the condition of affairs had been less auspicious of success. The Democratic party, for a long succession of terms, with slight exception, controlled the Federal Government, and ruled the policy of the country. The expenses of the Government from about \$— under the second Adams, and \$— under Mr. Fillmore, had increased to \$— under Mr. Pierce, and were rapidly swelling to more than \$100,000,000 under Mr. Buchanan. The principle that "to the victors belong the spoils," borrowed from degenerate days, but at one time indignantly repudiated by all parties, had for a long period of time, under successive Democratic administrations, been avowed as their rule of action; and the public offices, created for the public benefit, had been unblushingly bestowed as rewards on partisans, and tools, and minions of executive pleasure. The public press was controlled by some issue, originating in the interests of a few, and continued for special effect. Whatsoever is calculated to excite the public mind, to inflame passion, to produce discord and engender sectional animosity, is habitually seized upon by aspirants for place, and industriously pressed forward by politicians and the pressers in their interests. No consideration of the public peace; no consideration of fraternal concord; no consideration of the obligations, which as a nation, we owe to other nations, interposes restraint. In the last for office, and in the least of the duties of a citizen, we are gambled with for the gain of a few. In the very nature of things it was not possible for the question of slavery to remain unpropagated, it was by far too inviting to the ends of party.

Existing in a part only of the States, the institution of slavery is necessarily sectional, and claiming to extend itself into the unoccupied territory of the public domain, it was of itself calculated to excite to sectional jealousy. This was first seen when the thirteen colonies, pressed by the progress of the revolution, settled the articles of confederation. When independence was achieved, it was no longer a sectional question. It again exhibited its influence when Missouri applied for admission into the sisterhood of States. But greatly as the public mind was excited on these occasions, and important as were the measures involved, parties forbore to form upon it, and the patriotism of the country rose to equality with the exigencies of the day.

After 1820, for a long series of years, the country reposed in the settlements, and progressed, undisturbed by the baneful excitement. Certain societies of the Friends, contrived to forward to each Congress, memorials against slavery, but these were disregarded. A few fanatics in the Eastern States, combined into Abolition Societies, sent also their petitions to Congress, but these were disposed of like those of the Quakers, and the currents of National and State politics, flowed smoothly on, without a ripple proceeding from that cause.

In the progress of events, the abolitionists, increasing in numbers, associated themselves into a party organization, and in the States, especially of Ohio, New York, and Massachusetts, put forward candidates for political office. But, despised by both of the great parties into which the politics of the country had divided the people, they would assimilate with neither. In Massachusetts, for many years, Marcus Morton, was their standing candidate for Governor, and for a series of years, John Quincy Adams, their candidate for the Presidency. Engaged with the idea of general emancipation, they addressed themselves to measures, wholly without the jurisdiction of Federal authority, and they could find, therefore, no foundation, on which to rear the superstructure of an enduring political organization, and unassisted by extraneous influences, their disunity was certain, in the end, to exhaust its energy. But, unfortunately these influences were not withheld.

The old Federal party, under whose auspices the Government was inaugurated, and conducted through three successive administrations, found itself opposed by the Republican party, by which it suffered overthrow in the election of Mr. Jefferson. Proceeding upon the leading idea of opposition to executive influence, the victorious party successfully addressed itself to the subject of the one man power, and so consolidated its strength, that under the administration of Mr. Monroe, it found itself without a rival. Every where in the Federal and State Governments, the policy of the country was shaped by its influence.

Loyal in its aspirations, high-toned in its principles, in the conduct of our Federal affairs, it addressed itself to the great tenets with enlightened and patriotic devotion.—In our foreign relations it commanded the respect of other Powers, and in our domestic relations, while we were in our domestic situation, and the rights of the States, it recognized the duty of protecting and advancing the great industrial interests of the country, and under its fostering measures commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, made rapid progress in prosperity. No power not granted to the federal authority was assumed, and no power granted to it, when necessary to the general welfare, was abdicated. But, in the progress of time, divisions arose, and parties formed for the

advancement of political favorites. One division addressed itself to popular appliances, and assumed the name of "Democracy," a name which soon was found strongly to distinguish its prominent features. By artful appeals to popular prejudice, by loud professions of love for the people, this division succeeded to power, and inaugurated an era in which the executive department stretched its powers to unheard of extents. Then was begun that fatal resort to purchasing support with the emoluments of office, and the proclamation went forth that "to the victors belong the spoils."

The other division took the name of Whigs; a name in British history significant of opposition to Kingly power, and in this country illustrated in our annals by patriotic devotion to the cause of liberty. True to the antecedents of the great Republican party; pursuing its high purposes, the Whigs cast themselves in opposition to Democratic excesses, and invoked the public judgment upon the dangerous tendencies of Federal affairs. Although the dominant party experienced some defections from its ranks, the iron rule of party held stern sway; but in the hands of Mr. Van Buren the sceptre was held by a feeble grasp. The misrule, the extravagancies, the work, the corruptions of the administration, were more than the positions of the Democracy could withstand, and for a time the people were rallied to the rescue. In the North, the great States of New York, Ohio and Massachusetts, and in the South, the States of Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina, were in the ranks of the Whigs, while in Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and Virginia, and some of the other States, the contest for the supremacy was sharp and doubtful.

The great questions of Executive power, of Congressional responsibility, economy, reform of abuses, of protection to the great interests of the country, were pressed at every point, and the opposing hosts reeled and staggered under their irresistible force.—Condemned upon these issues by the public judgments, in their extremity they let fly a Parthian arrow at the pursuing hosts, and the envenomed point rankled in the bosom of the country. For the first time in our history, the question of slavery was introduced for party effect, and that dangerous element intruded into the conflict of parties. The Democrats of the Southern States set themselves up as the exclusive guardians of the institution of slavery, while those of the Northern States were strenuous in the interest of freedom, and the Whigs found themselves in the anomalous condition of being assailed in one quarter as unsound on the question of slavery, and denounced in the other as untrue to liberty. Yet both in the North and in the South, there were in the ranks of the Whigs men as eminent for ability, and as illustrious for integrity and patriotism, as ever adorned the division of a party, and as thoroughly identified with the interests of their sections, as any that lived in them. The susceptibility of the Southern mind to the interests of slavery, enabled the Democrats to weaken the Whigs in the slaveholding States, and finally to withdraw them from their influence, while in the North they combined with the Abolitionists, and succeeded to power in the States of Ohio, New York and Massachusetts. During these operations the victors had no difficulty in uniting for the common purpose. On whatever battle fields they fought, they were wings of the same army, fighting for the same spoils, and when met together in general convention, resolutions of equivocal import, designed to admit of opposite construction, were put forth, as the platform of the party, on which either wing could securely stand in the region where it was to give battle.

It was not the least remarkable feature of this strange anomaly that success achieved at the North by abolition aid, were heralded at the South as Democratic victories, until, at last, the party became jubilant over the election of Marcus Morton to the chief executive office of the State of Massachusetts.

The new element thus introduced into the conflict of parties, tended necessarily to sectional antagonism, and it was easy to see that, however well it served the exigency of the moment, it was likely, in the end, to bring discord into the party on whose behalf it was invoked. As a political issue, it tended to mislead, to excite passions, to inflame prejudices, to sectionalize parties and imperil slavery. But no considerations of statesmanship, no enlightened forecast of party-peace, no regard for the peace of the country and the safety of its institutions, no respect for the integrity of the Union; nothing availed to restrain the Democracy from the desperate resort. Introduced upon the political arena, it soon engrossed the public mind, and the success that attended it in the Southern States, invited to a similar use of it in the Northern States. Now, all other issues are laid aside, and opposing parties rely for success in the different sections, upon their ability to excite and exasperate the minds of the masses by the laudation and abuse of slavery.

The claim of legislative power to exclude slavery from the common territory, was a fruitless source of agitation. In the ordinances of 1787, providing a government for the Northwestern territory, it was declared that involuntary servitude except for crime, should be forever excluded therefrom. This ordinance was contemporaneous with the formation of the federal constitution. Being adopted by the Congress of the confederation, it was ratified by express provision of that instrument, and so the unfortunate policy was inaugurated at the birth of the Government. But for a long time nothing occurred to disturb the peaceful relations of the States. Under Mr. Jefferson's administration, Louisiana was purchased from France, and subsequently Florida was purchased from Spain, and in both territories slavery was recognized and established by law, and in the inhabited parts was actually existing at the time of the purchases. No effort was made to interfere with the general authority of Federal authority, but when Missouri applied for admission, it was proposed to impose upon her people the condition of excluding slavery from the new State. The struggle ended in a compromise by which the line of 36°30' was drawn through the remaining part of the Louisiana purchase, and the application of the prohibition of the ordinance of 1787 to the part north of that line. The country acquiesced in the settlement and the excitement subsided, but in the division of parties, the question of slavery was not permitted to enter.

The States of Arkansas and Florida, in the course of events, were duly admitted, without question as to their system of labor. But, in 1850, another condition prevailed: the fathers of their uselessness, the great West was used to the Federal authority to interfere with it, but when Missouri applied for admission, it was proposed to impose upon her people the condition of excluding slavery from the new State. The struggle ended in a compromise by which the line of 36°30' was drawn through the remaining part of the Louisiana purchase, and the application of the prohibition of the ordinance of 1787 to the part north of that line. The country acquiesced in the settlement and the excitement subsided, but in the division of parties, the question of slavery was not permitted to enter.

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The Recent Tragedy.

The Petersburg Express of yesterday publishes the following additional particulars of the recent tragedy in Franklin County, in which three persons were killed on the spot, and others dangerously wounded.

The feud existing between the Witcher and the Clement families is of long duration—some twelve months or more—and grew out of the marriage of Mr. James Clement, who is the youngest of five brothers, with Miss Victoria Smith, a daughter of the late Dr. Albert Smith, and a grand-daughter of Vincent Witcher, esq.

The parties are all wealthy, and occupy a high social position in the respective counties which they represent, the Clements belonging to Franklin and the Witchers to Pittsylvania county.